ON TERMS FOR CUTTING PLANTS AND NOSES IN ANCIENT SUMER*

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Cuneiform sources frequently mention fugitives, people who have fled from their duties.1 In order to prevent desertion, the law codes provided rewards for returning a slave to his master (LU 17; LH 17) and punishments for those who hide a fugitive or facilitate his escape (LH 15, 16, 19; LE 50). Nevertheless, none of these provisions deal with the physical punishment of fugitives, and other legal texts rarely mention it.

One of these exceptional attestations is found on an Ur III tablet kept in the British Museum. The text, BM 107955, which comes from Umma,2 reads as follows.

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2 The Umma provenance is based on the spelling ge-en₉(Sa). The writing en₉(Sa) is typical of Umma when used with the verbs ge-en₉ and en₉–tar. The former is found, for example, in AnOr 12, p. 103, no. 4; Montserrat 326; TCL 5 6059; and in the unpublished tablets BM 106219, BM 106451, BM 106641; en₉–tar is attested in SANTAG 6 20, BM 106451, BM 108094 (unpublished).

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Text

1 Im-ti-x
2 arád é-gal
3 mu-š-àm
4 i-žà-h-àm
5 NÌ.NAGAR-e
6 pa-ág 1-zi-e
7 1 Á-zi-da
8 ba-an-túm-mu
9 ì-gí ensi-ka-s / ba-ge-en
10 mu dÁmar-Suen / lugal-e Ur-bí-lum ki mu-hul

1 Imti-x, 2 slave from the palace, 3 fled 4 for three years. 5 (The) NÌ.NAGAR-e 6 will cut (his) nostril(s) 7 (and) will bring him to 1 Ázida. 3 It has been stated before the governor. 4 The year when Amar-Suen destroyed Urbilum (AS 2).

Commentary

Line 1: Im-ti-x

We cannot offer an explanation for the third sign of this personal name. The sign is like an 1b closed with a horizontal wedge in its upper part. Names beginning with im.ti may be composed with the Akkadian verb mâdu “to be plentiful” (Im-ti-dam, Im-ti-da), although neither possibility seems plausible in our text.

Line 5: NÌ.NAGAR-e

The word NÌ-NAGAR-e could be interpreted either as a verbal form in third sing. marû or as a personal name or a profession with ergative suffix. The only other attestation of NÌ.NAGAR known to us, in a similar context, rather points to the latter possibility:

1 Ur-dì-Lama 2 na-ab-bé-a 3 Ur-dì-Nanše-ra 4 ù-na-a-du 5 Ġemé-dì-Dumu-zi-da 6 tukum-bi r 1 ġemé Ba-la-la-kam 2 šu hé-na-bar-re 3 NÌ.NAGAR 4 na-kà-ab-tum-ma i-dab 5 Ba-la-la 6 hé-na-ab-sum-mu 7 na-mi-gur-re. “Thus says Ur-Lama: ‘Say to Ur-Nanše that, (concerning) Geme-Dumuzida, if this slave-girl belongs to Balala, let him release her for him (= Balala). (The) NÌ-NAGAR took charge of (arrested ?) her in the nakabtum. Let him give her to Balala. (This matter) must not come up again!’ ” (Molina, Aula Orientalis 17–18 [2000–2001]: 228, no. 40).

If NÀ.NAGAR should be interpreted as a profession, 4 it could be related to bulug4, possibly the instrument used by the NÌ.NAGAR “to cut the nostrils” (see below) of the fugitive. 5

3 See n. 37 below.

5 According to H. Waetzoldt (NABU 1995/117), bulug4 was a general term in Mesopotamia to designate sharp-pointed instruments. As a verb (“to sew”), beginning with i- “oil”, i-sur = šāhitu (AHw., p. 1074, s.v. šāhitu(m) “Kelterer”; CAD, vol. Ş, p. 62, s.v. šāhitu “preparer of sesame oil”) and i-rá-rá = muraqqû “unguent maker” (AWL, p. 335); i-zu, as variant of a-zu = asû “physician” (Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi, “Le portier des enfers,” p. 190).
Line 6: pa-ág–zí

1. The sign zé

In order to understand the meaning of the unusual Sumerian compound verb pa-ág–zí, it would be useful to begin with some comments about zé. This sign seems to have been introduced in the cuneiform system about the middle of the third millennium. It was mainly used to represent a syllable composed by a voiced or emphatic sibilant and the vowel e/i.

To the best of our knowledge, the sign zé first appears on a lexical tablet from Abu-Shalābih (IAS 53 vi 7’–8’) written as LAK539.6 It is rarely found in Ebla (see ARET 2, p. 165: x) and Tell Beydar (see ADTB, p. 41: 147). Nevertheless, a very different variant of zé (ARET 2, p. 166: zé) is often attested in Ebla, especially in Semitic personal names (I-in-zé, Ir-peš-zé, Zé-ba-da-ar, Zé-ba-da-mu, Zé-kam, etc.).

In Sargonic times, the use of the sign, usually also with the syllabic value in Semitic personal names, is widely attested, particularly in texts from Ešnunna, Girsu, and Tutub. The usual form in this period is LAK539, whereas LAK538 is rarely found (MAD 1 302 r 5 [cf. MAD 2, p. 225], MC 4 27 obv. ii 4).

Conversely, in the Neo-Sumerian period, LAK5387 is much more frequent than LAK539;8 the latter is still mainly used in Semitic personal names (Ṣi-lu-uš-Da-gan, Ṣi-la-šu, Te-zí-

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6 The text deals with temple officials and cultic personnel. These two lines, of uncertain reading (dú.żé / gam+gam.zé), are paralleled by a lexical text from Fara (SF 57 x 15–16), which reads DÜ.DÉ / GAM+GAM.DÉ.

7 Attested, for example, in TCL 5 6049 r iv 1 (§ 41), MVN 11 100 17, r 21 (§ 42), MVN 11 178 r 2 (§ 44 / VIII), MVN 13 706 r 20 (§ 44 / IX 29), MVN 11 128 3 (§ 46 / V), MVN 13 842 7 (§ 47 / III 24), TrDr 21 3 (§ 47 / VI), MVN 8 112 r 3 (§ 48 / IX 12), MVN 12 121 2 (§ 46 / XI), MVN 13 512 i 14, ii 25 (§ 46 / XII), MVN 11 182 r iv 4, 12 ([f] / AS)), MVN 13 845 4 (AS 2 / X 20), MVN 11 156 4 (AS 5 / III 11), TCL 2 5505 r ii 15 (AS 5 / X 9), Onatorio 1 160 2 (AS 9 / XI 18), Montserrat 342 3’ ([’1]), Montserrat 435 3’, 6’, 8’ ([’1]), MVN 11 89 r 2 (~ / ~).

8 Attested, for example, in MVN 3 162 3 (§ 39 / III), MVN 13 704 2 (§ 44 / III 21), MVN 13 121 7 (§ 44 / X 15), TrDr 86 7, r 5 (§ 45 / VII 17), MVN 11 182 2 (§ 45 / X), MVN 2 97 13 (§ 46 / II 14), MVN 15 312 2 (§ 47 / V 6), MVN 2 156 4 (§ 47 / V 16), Nik 2 489 2 (§ 47 / IX 11), MVN 11 182 r iv 13 ([f] / AS)), TCL 2 4682 r 1 (AS 1 / i 18), RA 8 197 22 1 (AS 5 / III), Montserrat 24 4 (AS 5 / IV 8), TCL 2 5504 r i 1 (AS 5 / X 9), MVN 15 33 1 (AS 5 / XI), MVN 15 179 2 ([AS / SS]), YOS 4 238 2’ (IS 1 / IX).
in-Ma-ma, Și-li-Adad, etc.) and toponyms (Ha-ma-zí), and the former is preferred to write other words. It is in this period that we find the sign ZE used for the first time with the meaning “to cut.” Earlier, this action was denoted by the verb sig7 (AWL 93, with other references in pp. 287–88).

In fact, in the Neo-Sumerian period ZE replaces sig7 in such contexts, except in Umma, where sig7 is still used. In Ur III texts, then, sig7 is phonetically written with the sign ZE when used in connection with plants or reeds; in this context, ZE is found in Drehem, Girsu, Ur, or Nippur and, to a lesser extent, also in Umma, whereas sig7 is found only in Umma. The replacement of sig7 by ZE in Ur III is illustrated as follows: a) sig7 and ZE are never found in the same text; b) the use of sig7 as a verb in agricultural context is restricted to Umma Ur III texts (it never appears in texts from other sites), where ZE is rarely documented; c) the action denoted by sig7 and ZE in Ur III texts occurs in contexts dealing with the same kinds of plants and reeds.

Other cases in which ZE is used for sig7 are, for instance: SANTAG 6 154, where the plural of the verb ti-() is written with the sign ZE (7 PN s mu-ma-a-šē en-nu-gā i-in-zē-eš-tām), whereas in other Pre-Sargonic, Sargonic, and Ur III texts, the logogram sig7 is preferred; the expression ur-sağ ZE gá-“the shining hero” (Šulgi O: 83), where ZE is to be understood as a writing for sig7 (cf. Šulgi G: 15: é-kur-ra sig7 mi-ni-gaš dAš-úm-babbar-re “Ašimbabbar appeared shining in the Ekur”).

2. The reading of ZE

With regard to the reading of the sign ZE in Sumerian, the frequent alternation of zi/ZE suggests ZI in most cases. Thus, for the verb ZE in agricultural contexts we find mu-zî instead of mu-zi in Gudea, Cyl A xii 24 (giš šu mu-du₄ giš-gaš-gun₄ mu-zi; see RIME 3/1, p. 77); in lexical lists we even have zi₁ = ZI = nasatăhu, naṭāpu, baqāmu, barāṣu in Aa III/1 82–85 (MSL 14, p. 320), and ZI, bu, ZI = nasātu in SIG7-ALAN XVIII 1–3 (MSL 16, p. 169).

Related to animals (see below), ZI and ZI are attested in the parallel texts BIN 3 503 (1 anšeš-su-ni-tā kiri₃-bi ki-2-ām i-zi mu-tūm lugal) and OIP 115 8 ([1 anš]-š-su-ni-tā [ki]ri₄-bi ki-2-ām i-zi mu-tūm lugal). In toponyms, Ha-ma-zî is preferred in Ur III, while Ha-ma-zi is usually found in pre-Ur III texts (see RGTC 2, pp. 72–73, and RGTC 1, p. 69); the alternation Ha-ma-zi/ZE is also attested in the sources of the letter RCU 21 10 (RCU, 669 2 [AS 1]).

In personal names and toponyms, LAK538 is also occasionally attested. LAK538 and 539 may even occur in the same text for two different personal names: TCL 2 5504 records SiLAK539)-tu-ti₃-Da-gan (i 7) and SiLAK538)-li₄-Adad (ii 19); MVN 11 182 records SiLAK538)-tu-ti₃-Da-gan (i 12) and ZI(LAK539)-na-na (i r iv 13).

10 LAK538 is used in the substantives giš-ze-na, ša-zi, šd₄-zi-da, dug₄-zi-tu-ru-am and ZI (“gall”: Cyl A x 23), although LAK539 is also sporadically attested. As a verb related to plants and reeds, ZI is always written with LAK538 (there are very few exceptions, for example, TPTS 568 4 [S 33 / VII, Torino 2 669 2 [AS 1]).

11 This was briefly suggested by J. Bauer, “Georgica Sumerica,” Or., n.s., 77 (1998): 123.

12 The only exception known to us is Torino 2 690; one should note that according to the copy of the tablet, the reading of line 2 should be corrected into giš-dih₃-hi₄, “zi₄” 8 sar-ta (instead of giš ū zi₄ 8 sar-ta).


14 The reference to H. de Genouillac, Trouvaille 69 7 has to be corrected into Ha-ma-zí. 
p. 258). In personal names, we have, for example, Lú-gi-zí (MVN 2 42 env. iii’ 2’ [ugula]) and Lú-gi-zí (TCCT 2 3966 r 5 [ugula]). Finally, the vessel dū₄₈-zī-tu-ru-um has a spelling with zi in Old-Babylonian (see MHEM 3, p. 109); gī₂₂₃-zī-na “palm frond” is written as gī₂₂₃-zī-na in ḫḫ 3 360 (MSL 5, p. 123); and zí “gall” is rendered as zí/zí-i in Proto-Ea 287 (MSL 14, p. 43), Ea IV 168 (MSL 14, p. 362), and Sb II 192 (MSL 3, p. 143).

On these grounds, we would suggest the reading zí for zé, and zi₄ for sig₇ when used with the meaning “to cut.” In the case of zé and sig₇ as the plural of the verb ti-(l), we believe that the readings zé and ze₄ would be adequate respectively.¹⁵

For sig₇-LAGAB, a kind of supervisor for work performed in fields and orchards, G. Marchesi convincingly proposes the reading agar₄-nīgin (“the one who makes the rounds in / roams the agar”).¹⁶ sig₇-a, attested in texts from other sites, seems to be a category of orchard worker (CST 263, TUT 146, etc.), whereas at other times it could be interpreted as a profession (SNATBM 487).

3. The meaning of zí

This matter was briefly treated by W. Sallaberger, who discussed the different ways of cutting reeds and suggested that the use of the verbs sig₇, ku₅-(r), and zí could be related either to different kinds of cutting or to the use of different instruments. M. Civil, in turn, wrote that “zé = baqāmu” is one of several terms used in Ur III texts to designate the removal of plants and weeds, the others being ku₅-(r), bū-(r), and sig₇-a. When in the context of fleece, Waetzoldt pointed out that it means “to shear” (udu ša-bi zí-a, udu gū-bi zí-a).²⁰

¹⁵ This is especially suggested by Proto Ea 413 ze-e = sig₇ (MSL 14, p. 48); the variant še used in Pre-Sargonic and Sargonic Nippur texts points also to a final vowel e. Note that ze₄(sig₇) as plural of ti-(l) is not restricted in Ur III texts to the city of Umma: in-dà-ze₄(sig₇) is documented, for example, in CTMA 1 13a 6-b 3 (Dr), SAT 2 861 r 7 (Dr), NATN 842 r 2 (Ni, Rk); siš-a ze₄(sig₇)-a is attested in AUCT 1 171 r 4 (Dr), AUCT 1 178 r 9 (Dr), AUCT 1 232 5 (Dr), AUCT 1 354 11 (?), BIN 3 500 r ii 6 (Dr), BRM 3 173 2 (?), MVN 13 878 3 (Dr), SAT 2 861 5 (Dr), 966 3, r 11 (Dr), TPTS 11 r 9 (Dr). In these cases, animals are always the subject; if the text deals with any other kind of goods, the expression used is siš-a gāl-lā: AUCT 2 168 2, Birmingham 2 84 r 2, 183 2, SNATBM 337 r 5, 394 r 24, 400 r 8, 434 r 22, 470 r 9. The alternation of /zel/ and /zēl/ is uncertain in some other cases: a) a text from Nippur records n gu-lā (gi-NE) DN a-na-ab-še-dē (NRVN 1 65), but we are not sure whether še is here a variant for zī “to cut (reeds)” (gu-lā are a kind of bundle of reeds that have already cut); b) ga-sig₇-a, as proposed by M. Stol (“Milchprodukte. A. In Mesopotamien,” RLA 8 [1993]: p. 193) and followed by R. K. Englund (“Regulating Dairy Productivity in the Ur III Period,” Or., n.s., 34 [1995]: 419), could be a variant for ga-še₄-a, although this matter deserves further study.

¹⁶ SNATBM 511 records the work performed in fields and is sealed by A-a-kal-la dumu Ma-an-ba sāgī₄sarā; this A-a-kal-la dumu Ma-an-ba is designated as agar₄-nīgin in other texts (see, for example, OrSP 47–49 431: collations in Oriens Antiquus 17 [1978]: 51). According to OrSP 47–49 501, the function of the agar₄-nīgin could be performed by several members of the same family (PN, 3 PNs, dumu-ni-me, agar₄-nīgin a-sā lugal-me). The position of the agar₄-nīgin was probably high: occasionally he brings animals or textiles for the mu₄₅-tūm of deities (Rochester 118, MVN 16 637, etc.).

¹⁷ G. Marchesi, “Alleged SIG₇ = agar₄ and Related Matters,” Or., n.s., 70 (2001): 313–17. Marchesi has also pointed out (personal communication) that the variant a-gār nīgin is already attested in the Ur III period in a text where a-gār nīgin are recorded together with other types of workers: engar sā-gu₄ sāhār-ra ú a-gār nīgin-me (CST 263 v 25, xi 1 [Dr]: cf. Gomi, MVN 12, p. 106 ad loc.).


In table 1 (further expanded in the Appendix below, pp. 9–16), we offer a chart of these verbs when they are used in connection with plants, reeds, and rushes removed either for the cleaning of fields (f) or from forests (fr), canebrakes (c), and orchards (o). The lexical evidence (zí = nasaḥu, baqāmu, etc.) and the context of Ur III texts suggest that the verb zí designates some kind of cutting plants. In the context of weeding and cleaning fields, this work was measured in sar and performed by unīl, muru or sà-gu₄ (mēme are never attested for this task). Such work designated with the verb zí has to be different from those denoted by ku₅-(r) and bù-(r), since they often appear in the same text. Nowadays, depending on the kind and size of the plant, there are also three ways of removing weeds from fields:

1. Using only the hands, uprooting the plant. This is the action denoted by the verb bù-(r).
2. Cutting or uprooting a woody or a thorny plant with a weedhook, a hoe, or a mattock. This should be the action denoted by the verb ku₅-(r).
3. Cutting the plant with a smaller instrument, a kind of sickle or billhook. This kind of sickle is different from the one used for mowing: it is broader, thicker, and resistant to accidental strikes against stones on the ground. That is probably the instrument mentioned in Limet, Métal, no. 19 AO 7873 (10 uruda₄ KIN ü zí “n ‘sickles’ of copper to cut plants”) and in NATN 469 (10 uruda₄ KIN 1/3 ma-na-ta gi-zí zí “10 ‘sickles’ of copper to cut zí-reeds”); it should be similar to the bar-hu-da, recorded in Emeš-Enten 209 (lú gi-zí bar-hu-da zí-[dè] gin gi-sumun-e dar-[a]r “the man who sets about cutting zí-reeds with the...

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**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ku₅-r</th>
<th>zí / zí₄(SIG₇)</th>
<th>bù-r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ü-gî₂-gî₂r-gunû</td>
<td>ašāgu “false carob (?)”</td>
<td>f *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(gî)₂ dih</td>
<td>baltu “(a kind of thorny weed)”</td>
<td>f *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ü-kul</td>
<td>ʲišbātu “(a kind of weed)”</td>
<td>f – *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ü-LAL-DU</td>
<td>“(a kind of weed)”</td>
<td>f *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ü-gî₂-hashur</td>
<td>hašhārakku “(a kind of weed)”</td>
<td>f *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(gü)₂ hirin₄-na</td>
<td>lardu “(a kind of weed)”</td>
<td>f * –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ügî₂KU459/460</td>
<td>“(a kind of weed (?))”</td>
<td>f *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ü-gî₂HAR-an</td>
<td>“(a kind of weed)”</td>
<td>f *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>üKU127</td>
<td>“(a kind of rush)”</td>
<td>? *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>üKU127.A</td>
<td>“(a kind of rush)”</td>
<td>f *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>üKU127.LAGAB</td>
<td>“(a kind of rush)”</td>
<td>f, fr, o *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>üKU127.ŞE</td>
<td>“(a kind of rush)”</td>
<td>f, fr * –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>üKU127.ŞE.ŞE</td>
<td>“(a kind of rush)”</td>
<td>f *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gi</td>
<td>gunû “reed”</td>
<td>f, c, o * *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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21 (*) = verb used to designate the removing of the plant; (-) = verb occasionally also attested.
On Terms for Cutting Plants and Noses in Ancient Sumer

The verb zi / zi₈(sig₇) would designate then the cutting of plants with a small and hook-shaped tool at the lower part of the stem.

The removing of rushes from fields, orchards, and forests was also indicated by the verb zi / zi₈(sig₇), although bù-(r) is found in some cases. In the case of reeds, when they were collected from fields, either the verb ku₅-r or zi / zi₈(sig₇) are attested; the latter is also used to designate the cutting of reeds in orchards (DAS 410) or canebrakes (MVN 16 1255).

Animals could also be the agent of an action denoted by the verb zi, as in the literary text Giš-gi 189: gi-zi gu₄-dē pa-bi zi-a nīḡ-gu₇ māš-anšē “the cattle eat (lit. ‘cut’) the leaves of the zi-reeds, fodder for (animals from) goats to donkeys.”

4. The verb pa-á₉–zi

Returning to our text, the meaning of pa-á (“nostril”) in the compound verb pa-á₉–zi is assured by Ugumu Sec. B: 9 (MSL 9, p. 67): pa-á₉-kiri₃-ḡu₁₀ = na-hi-ir ap-pi-ia. With regard to zi, we are again dealing with the verb discussed in the previous section. In this case, however, it probably denotes a kind of physical punishment, namely, cutting or marking the nose of the fugitive.

This compound verb is attested, to the best of our knowledge, in only three other texts. Unfortunately, two of them are badly preserved, and the interpretation of the third is far from clear:

(1) Montserrat 342: ¹ [..] x x[(x)] ² [i²-zā]h²-ām / pa-á₉ ba-an-zi ³ [a]-rā-2-kam-šē ⁴ ê-ûr-ra in-buru₄(ṽ) ⁵ igi A-kal-la enši-šē ⁶ ba-ge-en₆ “... (PN) [had] made a hole in the roof (and escaped). It has been stated before the governor.”


(3) SP 2.76 (SP, p. 232; PAS, p. 61): anšē gù an-mur lugal anšē-ke₄ pa-á₉ an-zí ba-da-ra-ab-e₁₁-dē-en-dē-en kaš₄-a ɡin-na-e-šē. ‘A donkey brayed. The owner of the donkey pierced¹ its nostrils (to put a nose-ring’). ‘We are getting away from here! Run quickly!’ he said.”

Texts nos. 1 and 2 deal with humans. Text no. 2 is very damaged in this section, so it is difficult to ascertain the sense of some of the sentences; it is clear, however, that a negative description of Engarduɡ’s features is being made.

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24 The action of pruning is never meant with the verb zi / zi₈(sig₇). The only doubt could arise from texts recording a number of bales or bundles of reed, followed by the expression gi-(zi) zi₈(sig₇)-a. It would seem that a different meaning from “the reeds have been cut” is required here. Nevertheless, in these cases either a place-name, which indicates where the action was performed, or the agent of the action (usually erén or a personal name) is always added. Thus, what is relevant in this expression is where the reeds were cut or who performed the action.

25 Reeds that have been cut may be classified as gi, gi-zi, and rarely gi-ne (Nik 2 189): gi-šid-da was probably the expression used for “defoliated reed”: see Waetzoldt, “’Rohr’ und dessen verwendungsweisen anhand der neusumerischen Texte aus Umma,” Bulletin on Sumerian Agriculture 6 (1992): 140, n. 55.

26 There is also a Spanish verb, “rozar,” which may be used for either cutting plants, weeding, or grazing.


28 The verbal form pa-á₉ l-zi-e seems to exclude the interpretation of zi as zi-ir “to scratch, to tear up” (l-zi-re would be expected), as Gordon suggests for the proverb 2.76 (SP, p. 232).
Text no. 1, the first lines of which are poorly preserved, deals with a person who had fled for a second time.29 If our interpretation is correct, he was punished the first time with the cutting or marking of his nostril(s).

In the corpus of Ur III legal texts, we know only one other example of physical punishment of fugitives:

1Gu-ú-gu 2 arád Ur-d 3 ba-an-da-záh 4 mu-dab 5 i-gi in-ğar 6 mu lugal u 4 a-rá-2-ka 7 1-záh-dê-na 8 ga-hul-dê in-du11. “Gu’ugu, slave of Ur, fled and was captured. He appeared (before the judges) and swore by the name of the king: ‘the day I flee for a second time, may I be mutilated!’” (NRVN 1 1; Lafont, RJM, pp. 58 f., no. 19).

In non-Sumerian law codes, mutilations for different reasons are attested, albeit never concerning fugitives. These punishments are:30 to pluck out the hair (MAL A 59); to pluck out the eye (LH 193); to blind (LH 196); to cut off the ear (LH 205, 282, MAL A 4, 5, HitL 95, 99); to mutilate the ear (MAL A 59); to pierce the ears and thread them on a cord tied at the back (MAL A 40); to cut off the nose (MAL A 4, 5, 15, HitL 95, 99); to cut out the tongue (LH 192); to knock out a tooth (LH 200); to lacerate the face (MAL A 15); to cut off the breast (LH 194); to cut off the hand (LH 195, 218); and to castrate (MAL A 15, 20).

The problem of interpreting pa-á-g–zi as a mutilation of the nose rests upon the fact that this verb is also used for equids. It is not reasonable to imagine that the donkey’s nostrils are injured in the proverb quoted above (SP 2.76). The same difficulty arises in the interpretation of the parallel texts BIN 3 503 and OIP 115 8, where the appearance of an equid is described using a similar expression: 1anše-sí-nítá kiri3-bi ki-2-àm i-zí/zi, “a horse whose muzzle has been ‘cut’ on both sides (i.e., the nostrils).”

In the case of horses and donkeys, a kind of piercing or cutting could be described using the verb zi. It would be intended for the nose-rings to which reins were attached.31 This type of nose-ring for equids is well documented in iconography.32

Prisoners might also have these nose-rings, which were used for ropes. They are represented on reliefs,33 for example, and mentioned (šerretum) in a text of Tigrath-Pileser I: “I subdued 30 of their kings. Like oxen I attached ropes to their noses (and) took them to my city.”34

Nose-ropes for people are also attested in Ur III texts (ēš kiri3), particularly in some letter-orders:

29 In the edition of the text (Montserrat 342), Molina proposed the interpretation of the compound verb pa-á-g–zi as “to glide through a vent,” being zé-(r) = neḫešû “to glide.” In light of the text now discussed, this interpretation has to be corrected (see also the preceding footnote).
30 From M. T. Roth, Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor (Atlanta, 1995).
31 In the case of the proverb SP 2.76, this action would be due to the need for controlling the ass.
34 A. K. Grayson, RIMA 2, A.0.87.2 26–27.
On Terms for Cutting Plants and Noses in Ancient Sumer

1 Ba-zi² ú-na-a-du₁₁³ Ur-d₄-Nanše dumu-dab₅ Lú-d₄ rú-a-ka-ra r¹ ēš kiri₃-sē² na-ba-dū. “Say to Bazi: ‘He must not bind a rope to the nose of (= detain) Ur-Nanše, worker-d.” (TCS 1 48).

1 Na-ba-ša₂₆ ú-na-a-du₁₁³ īmē Lú-d₄-Dumu-zi-ke₄₅ in-tuku-a r¹ [ēš] kiri₃-sē² na-ba-dū. “Say to Nabaša: ‘He must not bind a rope to the nose of (= detain) the slave-girl whom Lu-Dumuzi has married. She is the slave-girl of Dugunizi’” (TCS 1 158; LEM, no. 129).

1 Lú-d₄-Utu² ù Ur-d₄-Nanše-ra³ ú-ne-a-du₁₁⁴ Ur-d₄-Lama⁵ Lú-d₄-Nin-Dar-a⁶ Lú-ka-gi-na r¹ He-sa₆-mu² ēš-kiri₃ nu-ur₅-re³ šu ha-bar-re. “Say to Lu-Utu and Ur-Nanše:37 ‘they must not fasten38 the nose-rope to (= detain) Ur-Lama, Lu-Nindara, Lu-kagina (and) Hešamu. Let them release (these people)!” (Pettinato, Oriens Antiquus 7, p. 169, no. 1; LEM, no. 138).

We are not sure whether in these texts ēš kiri₃(-sē)-dù/ur₅ is to be understood literally (“to bind a rope to the nose”) or ad sensum (“to detain”). It is only a hypothesis that the compound verb pa-ā₉–zí could have any relation with a piercing performed on prisoners to insert a nose-ring. Yet this is the only link we can suggest with this verb, when it is used in connection with equids. In any case, pa-ā₉–zí clearly denotes physical injury inflicted by using a small hook-shaped instrument on the noses of fugitives who were captured.

Appendix

In studying the use of the verb zí / ziₓ(sig₇) in the Ur III texts, we collected the material concerning the removal of plants from fields, forests, and orchards. Our purpose was to ascertain which verb (ku₅-(r), bù-(r), zí/ziₓ) was used to designate the cutting or uprooting of each plant. We believe that this material could be useful for agricultural studies in the Neo-Sumerian period.

ú/gis čûr-gunû = ád, eddettu “boxthorn”; kiš₁₇(-g/k), ašāgu “false carob (?)”

Some different readings for these plants may be found in Ur III texts editions (ád, addú, čûr, čûr-gûnu, kiš₁₇). Civil has pointed out (personal communication) that čûr-gûnu is used for two different plants: ád (eddettu) and kiš₁₇(-g/k) (ašāgu).39 In fact, lexical lists offer both possibilities (Hh 3 432, 439 = MSL 5, pp. 130–31; Diri II 250–51), but it is very difficult to ascertain which one is meant in Ur III texts.

35 For dumu-dab₅-ba, a category of worker, see A. Salonen, Agricultura Mesopotamica (Helsinki, 1968), p. 322 (the text quoted as MAH 16251 has been published by Sauren, MVN 2 59).
37 This Ur-Nanše could also be the one mentioned in the letter-order cited above (see Molina, “Neo-Sumerian Letter-Orders in the British Museum. I,” Aula Orientalis 17–18 [2000–2001]: 228, no. 40).
38 We interpret ur₅ = pâdum “to imprison with fetters (= acc.)”: AHw., p. 808, s.v. pâdu(m); CDA, p. 260, s.v. pâdu(m).
The determinative preceding ĝûr-gûnû is usually ú. In these cases, both readings úâd and ú̱kiš17 could be defended. Thus, we find a-sâ âm-úâd-da šu ūr-ra (Ontario 2 155), n sar ú̱kiš17 n-sar-ta (NATN 815), and n gurus a-sâ Ka-ú̱kiš17-ke4 a du11-ga (SAT 2 715).

According to Ur III administrative texts, ú̱ûûûûnû was a very common weed, frequently recorded together with ŝûûûhû. It was removed from fields mainly by male workers during the months III,40 IV,41 VI,42 VII,43 VIII,44 IX,45 and X;46 the task could be performed twice.47 There are some field names that include the term: a-sâ úûûûûnû (see above), a-sâ du6-ûûûûnû,48 a-sâ úûûûûnû,49 and a-sâ âm-úâd-da (see above). In UTI 4 2580 (SS 8 / IV), Agu, an Uma official in charge of products made of wood and reeds,50 receives úûûûûnû, pēš-mur₅, and KWU125;šê; perhaps to be used as fuel.

With the determinative giš, úûûûûnû is attested, for example, in Gudea Cyl. A xii 24. In the context of cleaning fields, gišûûûûnû is documented in a group of texts with the same structure (n UN:FL a-sâ GN gišûûûûnû ku₅-a gána PN ugula PN [usually Lû-ûûûûNanna]) and mostly dated to IS 2 IV–V.51 There is also a field bearing its name: a-sâ âm-ûûûûnû (from Umma),52 with the variant gišûûûûnû (TENUS 90 22); we are not sure whether this is the field recorded in Ontario 2 155 as a-sâ âm-úâd-da (see above).

An Ur III collection of medical prescriptions mentions the use of the leaves (pa) and roots (e-ri₄-na) of gišûûûûnû for healing purposes.53 The verb used to designate the cutting of úûûûûnû was always ku₅-(r).54

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40 SAT 2 1046 r 7 (AS 7 / III).
41 SAT 3 1904 2 (SS 9 / IV 1).
42 UTI 3 2122 1 (AS 8 / VI 9).
43 SACT 2 60 2 (AS 7 / VII 2), Torino 2 692 2 (SS 9 / VII 2).
44 SAT 2 1027 7 (AS 7 / VIII), MVN 14 249 3 (SS 1 / VIII), SNATBM 502 i 3, 4 passim (SS 5 / VIII), Torino 2 694 2 (SS 9 / VIII 29), AAICAB 1/1 Ashm. 1911–139 (SS 9 / VIII 23), SAT 3 1881 2 (SS 9 / VIII).
46 BIN 5 237 2 (SS 44 / X 25).
47 ûûûûnû a-râ-2-kam 12 sar-ta: AAICAB 1/1 Ashm. 1911–139 2 (SS 9 / VIII 23).
48 See, for example, SNATBM 350 14 (AS 5), SAT 2 1027 r 9 (AS 7 / VIII), SAT 2 1114 i 7, r vīi 33, viii 48 (AS 5), UTI 3 1638 4 (AS 9), UTI 5 3075 r 3 (AS 8), UTI 5 3462 11 (AS 8').
49 See, for example, ASJ 13 231, no. 74 r i 9 (S 43), MVN 11 8 2 (S 48), SAT 2 1109 iii 70, r v 35 (AS 8), ASJ 13 222, no. 69 iii 18 (SS 5 / - 23), SNATBM 168 r 15 (IS 2), MVN 8 181 r ii 3, 3' (f 1).
50 Hans Neumann, Handwerk in Mesopotamien (Berlin, 1993), pp. 135 f.
51 SET 256 3, 10 (AS 1 / IV), UTI 6 3578 2 (IS 2 / IV 19'), UTI 3 2260 2 (IS 2 / IV 22), UTI 5 3205 2 (IS 2 / IV 25), UTI 3 2171 3 (IS 2 / V 1), UTI 3 2186 2 (IS 2 / V 8), UTI 3 2061 3 (IS 2 / V 20), UTI 3 2119 5 (IS 2 / V 27), UTI 5 3206 2 (IS 2 / V 25).
52 See, for example, SAT 2 679 r 7 (AS 1 / VII–VIII), BIN 5 235 r 12 (AS 1 / VIII), MVN 3 223 r 1 (AS 1), Nik 2 105 3 (AS 1), BIN 5 217 8 (AS 2), BIN 5 241 4 (AS 2), SNATBM 324 r 2 (AS 2), UTI 4 2543 4 (AS 6 / III), UTI 3 1830 r 13 (AS 6 / VII), SAT 2 951 r 7 (AS 6), UTI 5 3418 5 (AS 6), UTI 3 1812 r 7 (AS 7 / II), UTI 3 1728 r 6 (AS 7 / IX), UTI 4 2768 8 (AS 7), UTI 5 3491 r 8' (AS 7), SAT 3 2119 ii 27, r v 39, vi 58 (AS 8), UTI 5 3476 r 5 (AS 8), UTI 5 3480 8, 10 (AS 8'), SAT 2 1109 r iv 10, 19 (AS 8) (a-sâ gišûûûûnû á-aša- áûûûûnû), UTI 4 2888 12 (AS 9), UTI 5 3492 4 (AS 9), SAT 3 1319 r 8 (SS 2), TEL 5 5676 v 17' (SS 2), UTI 3 1748 4 (SS 2), SNATBM 502 r ii 11 (SS 5 / VIII), UTI 4 2397 3 (SS 5).
54 For example, MVN 13 285 3 (AS 5), SNATBM 324 2 (AS 2), SNATBM 351 r 4 (AS 5), SNATBM 437 3 (SS 1), TEL 5 5676 vi 23, 25 passim (SS 2), MVN 13 364 4–5, r 11–12 (SS 3), Montserrat 237 1 (SS 4), MVN 13 365 3 (SS 5), Nik 2 138 5 (SS 5), YOS 4 225 i 3, 5 passim (SS 5), UCP 9/2 6 6 (SS 9), and texts quoted in the footnotes above. The restoration [û̱kiš17'] zi-a in UTI 4 2769 r 8 is probably erroneous.
(gīš) dih, baltu, "(a kind of thorny weed)"  

It is nearly always written with the determinative gīš, albeit some exceptions do exist. After ūgir-gunû, it is the most frequently mentioned weed in Ur III administrative tablets; both weeds were often found in the same field. Their cutting is attested during the months VI, VII, and VIII.  

As in the former case, the verb used to designate its removal was always ku₅-(r).  

ūkul, ishabtu, "(a kind of weed)"

The reading of the name of this weed is based on the lexical evidence. Further proof for this reading appears in NATN 35 i 11', 13' and passim, which records ū kukûl(gul); the interpretation of ku.gul as kukûl is confirmed in the same text by the rendering of nīg-gul as nīg-kukûl(r i 10, 12).  

Ur III texts mention this plant in the context of cleaning fields also infested with ūgir-gunû, and mišdih; it grew together with ūhirinx-na. The plant was removed during the months V, VII, and VIII. There is also a field bearing the name of this plant: a-sàūkul. One text mentions its deposit in the workshop of a smith among a long list of products.  

The verb used to designate its cutting was mainly zī / zi x(sig), albeit ku₅-(r) is also often attested.

ūLÁL.DU, "(a kind of weed)"

The usual reading of the name of this plant as ukû has no basis. It is mentioned in the context of cleaning fields. There are also several toponyms that include its name: a-sà LÁL.DU

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55 Civil, Studies E. Reiner, p. 5; cf. also Maekawa, “Cultivation Methods,” p. 124. PDT 2 918 i 20 (AS 6 / VI) records gīš-dih-hur-sa from miš-kirî6-d슬-gi, which is probably a different kind of plant.  
56 OrSP 47/49 365 3 (AS 7), TPTS 428 2 (AS 8). The reading gīš in UTI 4 2604 r 29 (SS 2) should be corrected into ḫÁL.DU'.  
57 BIN 5 220 1–2, 5–6 (AS 8 / VI).  
59 MVN 16 941 (SS 1 / VIII 10), SAT 3 2096 2 (- / VIII).  
60 For example, NATN 343 2 (AS 8), MVN 16 1312 4 (AS 8), ASJ 18 82, no. 17 ii 2, 9 (SS 7).  
61 See AHw., p. 393, s.v. ishabtu "etwa ‘Gras’ ‘; CAD, vol. I1, p. 233, s.v. ishabtu "(a grass or a weed)."  
62 UTI 4 2882 r 21 (SS 4), CST 621 2 (SS 9 / VII 7).  
63 UCP 9/2 58 2 (SS 9 / V 1), TCNY 343 2 (- / V 8); for the reading ḫkul, see A. L. Oppenheim, AOS 32, p. 163 Bab. 10.  
64 SAT 2 608 1, 5 (S 48).  
65 SAT 2 608 1, 5 (S 48), SAT 2 700 2 (AS 2 / VIII), SAT 3 1886 2 (SS 9 / VIII 12), SAT 3 1899 2 (SS 9 / VIII 17).  
66 MVN 9 10 r 7 (S 47).  
67 UTI 5 3274 r i 5, 11 (L 1).  
68 See MVN 16 1312 4 (AS 8), SACT 2 58 4 (AS 8), SACT 2 61 2 (AS 8), SACT 2 128 5–6 (AS 8), SACT 2 132 5–6 (AS 8), UTI 3 1624 4 (AS 8), UTI 3 1972 2 (AS 8), UTI 4 2697 2 (AS 8), UTI 6 3691 4 (AS 8), UTI 4 2822 2 (SS 1), UTI 3 1696 2 (SS 3), UTI 4 2769 2 (SS 3), UTI 4 2882 r 21 (SS 4), ASJ 18 82, no. 17 r i 4 (SS 7).  
69 See, for example, TPTS 421 4 (AS 8), UTI 4 2398 3 (AS 8), MVN 14 363 r 2 (SS 1), UTI 4 2555 r 13 (SS 1), UTI 3 1738 3 (SS 2), UTI 4 2488 1 (SS 3).

The verb used to designate its cutting was zi₇(x(sig₇)).

ú-ĝî hašhtü, "(a kind of weed)"

To the best of our knowledge, this plant is attested only in six Ur III tablets. The verb used to designate its removal from fields was either zi₇(x(sig₇)), or bû-(r).

(u)hirinₓ-na, lardu, "(a kind of weed)"

The reading hirinₓ for KWU318 was suggested by Civil. The interpretation of -na as a phonetic complement could be supported by Birmingham 2 61 1, 6, where the name of the plant is written with and without -na; furthermore, UTI 5 2514 3 and TCL 5 5675 v 23, 25, and passim, show that /a/ of -na is not /ak/, since the name of the plant is written here without ú. In most cases, -na is written separately from hirinₓ, although in some instances we find it inserted at the end of hirinₓ as a ligatur.

Administrative texts mention this plant as being removed from fields, frequently together with úmîs hašhur, hašharâkku, "(a kind of weed)". To the best of our knowledge, this plant is attested only in six Ur III tablets. The verb used to designate its removal from fields was either zi₇(x(sig₇)), or bû-(r).

This plant is attested in only three texts. At least in one case (UTI 5 3185), the sign seems to be KWU459, which is not the sign for anšê (KWU460) commonly used in the
Ur III period. Together with kiš (KWU456)⁸⁹ and KWU457,⁹⁰ KWU459 is a variant of KWU460⁹¹ and may also be used for ġir.⁹² This plant should not be confused with giš ġir “foot fetters.”⁹³

The name of this plant is documented in the context of cleaning fields. It is possibly also attested in the name of the field a-ša gána-KWU459.⁹⁴

The verb used to designate its removing was bû-(r).

ú-giš har-an, “(a kind of weed)”

The name of this plant is rendered in Ur III texts as har-an, ú-har-an, giš har-an; the exceptions are: ú-giš har (SAT 2 480 r 9), ú-har-ra-an (Uti 6 3760 9’, r 3), and ú-an.giš har (MVN 1 94 3–4).

Usually removed from fields together with giš dih and ġir-gunâ by male workers, it was then transported either to reservoirs and canals⁹⁵ (frequently from a-ša gána-Ur-gu to I7-salâ-la),⁹⁶ to the dub-lâ,⁹⁷ ûtu,⁹⁸ or to the nakabtum.⁹⁹ Only two texts inform us that the removing of the plant took place during the months VII and VIII.⁹⁹

The verb used to designate its removal was always bû-(r).¹⁰⁰

AN. SAHAR, “(a plant?)”:

This is attested in UTI 4 2514 1 (AS 8), in a context which seems to be of weeding. Its removal (?) was designated with the verb ku5-(r).

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⁸⁹ See, for example, Montserrat 1 1, 2 (§ 30 / VI) (ġir [obv. 3] is in this text rendered with KWU460, in order to distinguish it from anse = KWU456), Hirose 66 3 (§ 47 / III 12; with KWU459 for anše [obv. 1–2]), HSS 4 42 7, r 4 (AS 1; with KWU460 for ġir [r 7]); TUT 25 1 2, 3, 4, 5 ([?]); with KWU460 for anše [r iii 7, 8, 9, 10]), NATN 51 2 (IS 2 / XII).
⁹⁰ For example, MVN 10 117 3 ([ ] / X).
⁹¹ MVN 3 191 2 (§ 41 / I), Hirose 66 1, 2, (§ 47 / III 12), and the goddess-name Nin-anše-lâ in MVN 3 153 r 1 (§ 37 / VI).
⁹² See, for example, MVN 4 46 r 6 (AS 4), MVN 3 298 4 (§§ 9).
⁹⁴ For example, TCL 5 5676 v 10’, r ix.13’ (SS 2).
⁹⁵ For example, MVN 16 11575 3–5 (SS 1 / IX), MVN 16 1359 4–5 (SS 2), UTI 5 3403 9-r 3 (SS 2), SAT 3 1574 1–3 (SS 5).
⁹⁶ For example, SAT 2 1028 1–3 (AS 7) (here <gána-Ur-gu-ta>), SACT 2 2 r 13–14 (SS 2), UTI 4 2851 5-r 1 ([ ]).
⁹⁷ Uti 3 1743 3–5 (SS 1), Uti 3 1686 3–5 (SS 3), MVN 3 309 4-r 7 (SS 5), SAT 3 1577 r 11–13 (SS 5).
⁹⁸ For example, TPTS 440 1–4 (§ 42 / AS 6) (here gá-nun dih-SNATBM “Sail-pol-â-ka na-kà-ab-tum ġir-ra”), MCS 3 p. 90 112946 1–2 (AS 3), MVN 16 1013 1–3 (AS 7), UTI 3 2253 1-r 7 (AS 7), UTI 4 2561 r 19–21 (AS 8), MCS 3 p. 55 112989 3–4 (AS 9), MVN 16 1344 1–3 (AS 9), MVN 16 1581 1–3 (AS 9), UTI 4 2633 2–4 (AS 9), Uti 3 1821 1–3 (SS 3), Uti 6 3717 10 (SS 3).
⁹⁹ SAT 2 385 (§ 44 / VIII), MVN 1 94 (SS 6 / VIII).
¹⁰⁰ For example, Uti 5 3073 6 (AS 7), Uti 5 3152 4 (AS 9), SNATBM 437 r 1, 4 (SS 1), MVN 13 364 r 14–15 (SS 3), Uti 6 3760 9’, r 3 (the verb bû-r is here rendered as bu-r). The only exception known to us is
Different kinds of plants, commonly considered to be rushes, are written with the sign KWU127 in combination with other logograms. Civil and Waetzoldt have shown that at least in some cases these are different sorts of rushes and not merely orthographic variants of the same word. Thus, according to Waetzoldt, KWU127 and A.KWU127 are recorded in the same text (DPOAE 1 108 r iv 3–6). To this Ur III attestation, the following examples can be added: KWU127.še and KWU127.še are jointly recorded in VO 8/1 30 3–4 (S 44) and MVN 10 230 i 17, iv 5, r vi 5, 8, viii 5, 11 (SS 2 or later); KWU127.še and KWU127.še.še are found in UTI 3 2082 3, r 11 (SS 1).

KWU127

This is rarely attested in Ur III; it is possibly documented in the name of a field: [a-šà . . .].tur. KWU127. MVN 14 387 mentions three bales of this plant, with two bundles each, which were deposited on a pile of bricks.

The verb used to designate its cutting was zi / zi₈ (SIG₇).

A.KWU127

This is attested in three administrative texts and in the name of a field (a-šà ki-sumun A.KWU127). It is also mentioned in medical prescriptions. The plant was measured in gû.

KWU127.A

This is documented in texts mainly dated to the reign of Šulgi. According to Civil, KWU127.A is the older spelling of KWU127.lagab. The plant was removed from fields and delivered in bales or bundles with different destinations: boatyards (probably for making ropes), the dam é-a-ga-ri, the mā-nun-da-mi-si₆-A-ab-ba, and “to spread it out for a.-bread” (ninda-a-aš-si₈ ba-ra-ge-dè).

SAT 2 715 2 (AS 2), although HAR-<an> has perhaps to be corrected into őiš-gumû.

Civil, Studies E. Reiner, pp. 49 ff.


It is documented, to our knowledge, in MVN 14 387 1 (SS 8), MVN 3 319 2 (IS 2 / III).

BE 3¹ 86 6 (- / -).

UTI 3 1948 1 (SS 8), AAICAB I/1 Ashm. 1911–1572 (- / -), CT 7 18390 9 (- / -).

ASJ 13 222, no. 69 iii 16 (SS 5 / - 23).


101 Civil, Studies E. Reiner, pp. 49 f.


103 It is documented, to our knowledge, in MVN 14 387 1 (SS 8), MVN 3 319 2 (IS 2 / III).

104 BE 3¹ 86 6 (- / -).

105 UTI 3 1948 1 (SS 8), AAICAB I/1 Ashm. 1911–1572 (- / -), CT 7 18390 9 (- / -).

106 ASJ 13 222, no. 69 iii 16 (SS 5 / - 23).


108 TPTS 208 1 (S 43 / II), Birmingham 2 28 1 (S 44 / XI), MVN 4 72 2 (S 44), SACT 2 145 2 (S 44), MVN 14 417 1 (S 45 / AS 2), SAT 2 888 3 (cf. SAT 3, p. 623) (AS 5), AAICAB I/1 Ashm. 1924–687 2 (SS 6), Birmingham 2 199 1 (IS 2 / XI), JCS 32 230 3′ ([?]).


110 TPTS 208 1–4 (S 43 / II), MVN 14 417 1–4 (S 45 / AS 2); add probably Birmingham 2 28 8 (S 44 / XI): dür-bi₇ mà-da-GA-še ba₂-ûs (cf. CST 585 3 [AS 2]: mà-da-GA ak-dè).

111 Birmingham 2 199 1–3 (IS 2 / XI).

112 AAICAB I/1 Ashm. 1924–687 1–7 (SS 6).

113 SAT 2 888 2–4 (AS 5).
The verb used to designate its cutting was zi₄(sig₇).¹¹⁴

²KWU127.lagab

This is usually read as ²numûn on lexical grounds. It is occasionally written without determinative.¹¹⁵

This plant was mainly removed from forests, and sometimes also from fields and orchards. It was measured in sar,¹¹⁷ gû,¹¹⁸ or sa “bundles.”¹¹⁹ Once removed, it was delivered to dams¹²⁰ and boatyards,¹²¹ to build a kitchen,¹²² and to make ropes,¹²³ sieves,¹²⁴ and baskets.¹²⁵ One basic source for study of this plant and ²KWU127.še is the archive of Ur-tar.luh and his son Ur-É-maš (see below). The usefulness of this plant is denoted by its inclusion in personal names and in the name of a goddess.¹²⁶

The cutting of this plant is once designated with the verb zi₄.¹²⁰

²KWU127.še

It is commonly read as ²sub₂.¹²³ Sometimes, TÚG is written instead of ²še.¹²⁶

According to Ur III administrative texts, it was the most common rush. It grew mainly in forests but also in fields. It was measured in sar,¹³⁰ gû,¹³¹ and sa “bundles.”¹³² Once collected, it was delivered to various destinations: dams and canals,¹³³ the (kun-zí-da)
dub-lá-\textsuperscript{134}Utu,\textsuperscript{135} the nakabtum,\textsuperscript{136} the ḡanun\textsuperscript{7} é-gibil,\textsuperscript{137} boatyards,\textsuperscript{137} and moon-festivals.\textsuperscript{138} It was used to make ropes for rafts (má-lá-a),\textsuperscript{139} boats,\textsuperscript{140} šakan-vessels,\textsuperscript{141} and packages (gu-lá).\textsuperscript{142} One personal name also includes the name of this plant.\textsuperscript{143}

An important archive for the study of this type of rush is the one of Ur-\textsuperscript{144}tar.lu\textsuperscript{144} and his son Ur-É-maš, supervisor of forests.

The verb used to designate its removal was mainly zi\textsubscript{x} (S\textsuperscript{1}G\textsubscript{7}),\textsuperscript{145} although bü-(r) is also attested.\textsuperscript{146}

\textsuperscript{134}\textsuperscript{134} SAT 3 1241 1–4 (ŠŠ 1), UTI 4 2382 1–8 (ŠŠ 2), UTI 4 2884 4–5 (ŠŠ 2).
\textsuperscript{135}\textsuperscript{135} UTI 5 3152 6–9 (AS 9), UTI 4 2393 1–4 (ŠŠ 1).
\textsuperscript{136}\textsuperscript{136} UTI 3 2082 r 10–11 (ŠŠ 1).
\textsuperscript{137}\textsuperscript{137} UTI 6 3829 r 1–3 (AS 8).
\textsuperscript{138}\textsuperscript{138} UTI 4 2781 6–r 9 (AS 8), UTI 6 3662 2, 4 (ŠŠ 3), MVN 16 1040 2–3 (ŠŠ 4\textsuperscript{7} / VI).
\textsuperscript{139}\textsuperscript{139} UTI 5 3152 r 1–3 (AS 9), SAT 3 1494 1–10 (ŠŠ 4 / V) ( . . . la-[a-du] is probably to be corrected here into kēš-[rā-(a)].
\textsuperscript{140}\textsuperscript{140} Babyl 8 Pl. VIII Pupil 34 1–r 1 (Š 42 / AS 6), TCL 5 5673 iii 17, 21 (Š 45 / AS 3), TCNY 141 1–2 (AS 5 / XI).
\textsuperscript{141}\textsuperscript{141} TCNY 325 1–2 (AS 1).
\textsuperscript{142}\textsuperscript{142} CST 757 1–2 (ŠŠ 2), MVN 16 1065 1–2 (ŠŠ 7).

This plant is to be considered a different type of rush from the former one, since both may appear in the same text (see above). The few texts recording this plant mention it in the context of cleaning fields by male workers.\textsuperscript{147} There is only one text which records female workers transporting it to a canal.\textsuperscript{148} The verb used to designate its removal was always bü-(r).\textsuperscript{149}

\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{134}134} SAT 3 1241 1–4 (ŠŠ 1), UTI 4 2382 1–r 8 (ŠŠ 2), UTI 4 2884 4–5 (ŠŠ 2).
\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{135}135} UTI 5 3152 6–9 (AS 9), UTI 4 2393 1–4 (ŠŠ 1).
\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{136}136} UTI 3 2082 r 10–11 (ŠŠ 1).
\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{137}137} UTI 6 3829 r 1–3 (AS 8).
\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{138}138} UTI 4 2781 6–r 9 (AS 8), UTI 6 3662 2, 4 (ŠŠ 3), MVN 16 1040 2–3 (ŠŠ 4\textsuperscript{7} / VI).
\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{139}139} UTI 5 3152 r 1–3 (AS 9), SAT 3 1494 1–10 (ŠŠ 4 / V) ( . . . la-[a-du] is probably to be corrected here into kēš-[rā-(a)].
\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{140}140} Babyl 8 Pl. VIII Pupil 34 1–r 1 (Š 42 / AS 6), TCL 5 5673 iii 17, 21 (Š 45 / AS 3), TCNY 141 1–2 (AS 5 / XI).
\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{141}141} TCNY 325 1–2 (AS 1).
\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{142}142} CST 757 1–2 (ŠŠ 2), MVN 16 1065 1–2 (ŠŠ 7).

100 l of barley are equal to 26 gu-lá, so that 1 gu-lá = 3.8 l.

\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{143}143} Ur-kwu127.šē.šē: UCP 9/1 27 5 (Š 47 / VIII), AAICAB I/1 Ashm. 1911–169 r 4 (ŠŠ 3 / šē.KIN-ku̯a).
\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{145}145} For example, UTI 4 2781 8 (AS 8), UTI 4 2393 3 (ŠŠ 1 / XII), UTI 6 3698 3 (ŠŠ 1), TPTS 390 7 (ŠŠ 2), UTI 4 2382 2 (ŠŠ 2), UTI 4 2600 2 (ŠŠ 3).
\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{146}146} See UTI 4 2779 5–6 (AS 8), UTI 5 3167 8, r 1 (AS 8), UTI 5 3152 7 (AS 9).
\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{147}147} SAT 2 1033 7–10, r 21–22, 24–25 (AS 7), UTI 5 3185 1–2, 6–7 (AS 9), UTI 6 3548 1, 2 (AS 9), SAT 3 1782 1–2 (ŠŠ 6).
\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{148}148} UTI 3 2082 1–3 (ŠŠ 1).
\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{149}149} See footnotes above.